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THESIS

**WINNING WITHOUT FIGHTING: MILITARY/NGO
INTERACTION DEVELOPMENT**

by

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December 2015

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**WINNING WITHOUT FIGHTING: MILITARY/NGO INTERACTION
DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

The evolving nature of conflict will require the U.S. military to conduct humanitarian operations more frequently and on a larger scale than ever before. Humanitarian operations require extensive civil-military interaction, and this thesis suggests that the U.S. military is not currently postured and prepared to handle the increasing humanitarian requirement.

This thesis analyzes the interactions that took place between the military, the Department of State, and non-governmental organizations throughout three case studies: Operation Unified Assistance (Indonesia, 2004), Operation Unified Response (Haiti, 2010), and Operation United Assistance (West Africa, 2014). Each case study is presented as an independent operation with its own observations and recommendations. The conclusion then identifies four significant generalized items—joint training, militaristic tendencies, integrated communications, and structural systems for collaboration—that challenged civil-military interaction at some point throughout each case.

This thesis concludes that a dedicated unit designed to immediately respond and lead the United States Government's humanitarian effort should be created including manpower and representation from each U.S. agency that plays a part in humanitarian operations. Legislation similar to the Goldwater-Nichols Act should pave the way for increased interagency interaction and cooperation to prepare the United States for the increasing demand for humanitarian response capabilities.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	assault command post
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
APAN	Asia-Pacific Area Network
ASCC	army service component command
CCC	Combined Coordination Center
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CIMIC	civil-military cooperation
CMOC	civil-military operations center
COCOM	combatant command
CSG	Combined Support Group
CSF-536	Combined Support Force 536
DART	disaster assistance response team
DDOC	deployment and distribution operation center
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DRAT	disaster relief assessment team
DOD	Department of Defense
DR	disaster relief
ETU	Ebola treatment unit
FAO	foreign area officer
GoA	Government of Haiti
GRF	global response force
HACC	humanitarian assistance coordination center
HAST	humanitarian assistance survey team
HIC	humanitarian information center
HR	humanitarian response
IASC	Interagency Standing Committee
IGO	international government organization
IO	international organization
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JFC-OUA	Joint Forces Command-Operation United Assistance

JFHQ	joint force headquarters
JHOC	joint humanitarian operations course
JLOC	joint logistics operations center
JOTC	joint operations and tasking center
JTF-536	Joint Task Force 536
JTF-H	Joint Task Force Haiti
LTG	Lieutenant General
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MINUSTAH	UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti
MITAM	mission tasking matrix
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NPS	Naval Postgraduate School
NRCC	national response coordination center
OCHA	UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance
ORC	office of the response coordinator
OUA	Operation Unified Assistance
PACOM	United States Pacific Command
RMT	response management team
SOUTHCOM	United States Southern Command
SOW	special operations wing
STS	special tactics squadron
TPU	UN Training and Partnership Unit
UN	United Nations
USAFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USARAF	U.S. Army Africa
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USG	United States Government

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I. INTRODUCTION

With the evolving nature of conflict today, experts believe the world will call on the U.S. military to conduct humanitarian and other non-combat operations on a larger scale and more frequently in the future. Much of this effort will involve working closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local populations, and political leaders. However, senior military leaders and national security scholars have expressed concern that the military's capabilities to conduct these missions need improvement. Army General David Perkins recently spoke to Army students at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) about the new Army Operating Concept and this growing concern.¹ In anticipation of future requirements that will be placed on the Army and the U.S. military as a whole, this thesis examines the question, "How can the U.S. military be more effective at interacting with civilian organizations in humanitarian response operations?"

A. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

"We can't kill our way to victory. ... It requires teamwork and cooperation," stated former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, Admiral Michael Mullen.² Historically, military victory has meant triumph in combat over an enemy. Today, however, military victory must be achieved in situations such as humanitarian assistance, disease control, or a natural disaster response, as well as on the traditional battlefield. Dominant global trends suggest that changing demographics, increasing food, water, and energy needs, climate change, natural and man-made biological developments, and destabilizing political groups all will continue to complicate global security and make triumph more complex. Many of these modern challenges require a fresh approach and a realization that they cannot be met with technology advancements and overwhelming force alone.

¹ General David Perkins, "Army Operating Concept," Lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA, December 9, 2014.

² Colonel Gregory Grimes, "Civil Affairs: Gathering the Reins," *Small Wars Journal*, 2009, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/199-grimes.pdf?q=mag/docs-temp/199-grimes.pdf>.

As General David Perkins said at the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the modernization of our military requires a balance recognizing technological limits and emphasizing greater human, cultural, and political interaction.³ Many conflicts in the future, requiring a humanitarian response from the military, will involve numerous organizations trying to come together to solve the same problem. In order to achieve victory in these cases, the U.S. military will have to interact with and rely on other entities including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local populations, and political figures. The success or failure of the military will depend greatly on its ability to cooperate and coordinate with groups that may have completely diverse points of view regarding the solution to the problem. It is not clear that the U.S. military is equipped to meet the ever-increasing demand for the human, cultural, and political interactions that it will face in humanitarian operations in the future.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Tactical Civil-Military Cooperation

Many scholars have discussed the difficulties that military units and individuals have had when working with civilian personnel. Volker Franke, for example, states, “The nature of complex humanitarian relief, peacebuilding, and reconstruction missions increasingly forces military and civilian actors to operate in the same space at the same time, thereby challenging their ability to remain impartial, neutral, and independent.”⁴

A significant problem noted in the literature on Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) is the doctrinal differences that motivate the activities of civilian organizations versus military units. For example, Thomas R. Mockaitis provides multiple reasons why U.S. CIMIC forces struggled to be effective in peace operations in Kosovo. His first point is the U.S. over-emphasis on force protection. He relayed the opinion of a spokesperson

³ U.S. Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1* (Fort Eustis, VA: 31 October 2014), 8; Perkins, “Army Operating Concept.”

⁴ Volker Franke, “The Peacebuilding Dilemma: Civil-Military Cooperation in Stability Operations,” *International Journal of Peace Studies* 11, no. 2 (2006): 7–8, http://www.gmu.edu/programs/icar/ijps/vol11_2/11n2FRANKE.pdf.

on site that the U.S. military acted like “force protection was the mission”⁵ rather than a component of the mission. The U.S. domestic political atmosphere deemed the loss of a soldier during a peace operation as unforgivable resulting in such stringent force protection measures.⁶ This made U.S. soldiers seem uptight and confrontational, which are not suitable characteristics for most peacekeeping missions. Mockaitis also reports that other entities on the ground “complained of GIs being brusque, rude, and, in many cases, outright abusive at checkpoints.” He details a senior international organization (IO) leader’s observation: “Even the way Americans carry their weapons intimidates people unnecessarily. While the British cradle their Armalites in a disarming manner that leaves them no less ready to respond, Americans carry rifles in the *engarde* position, treating every one they encounter as a potential threat.”⁷ Mockaitis argues that intimidation hinders good civil-military relationship building and that people prefer to be trusted to being threatened. If the military wants to keep soldiers out of harm, the information that comes from positive relations with the local community will provide more protection than a robust force protection program.⁸

Many authors, including Mockaitis and Joelle Jenny, identify the size and discipline of the U.S. military as a strength, but argue that this strength often transforms into a weakness in humanitarian operations. Mockaitis details how the size of the U.S. forces proves to be effective in most situations by providing immense amounts of power with precision. The hierarchal structure required to manage something that big, however, is a disadvantage during CIMIC and peace operations. Mockaitis recounts that many non-government organization (NGO) personnel found that utilizing the vast resources of the U.S. military was difficult because of the lengthy request and approval process required.⁹ Humanitarian operations often require a quick turnaround for decision-making and

⁵ Thomas R. Mockaitis, “Civil-Military Cooperation in Peace Operations: The Case of Kosovo,” *Strategic Studies Institute* (2004): 33–34, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/PUB583.pdf>.

⁶ Mockaitis, “CIMIC in Peace Operations: Kosovo,” 33–34.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

resource request procurement to take advantage of unanticipated opportunities to provide support. Jenny describes fundamentally different rationales that exist between military and humanitarian organization, which shed light on this dilemma: “While soldiers respond to clear lines of command, sets of rules and operational orders, aid workers are generally independent minded and retain considerable decision-making power at field level.”¹⁰

Mockaitis’ final point identifies the lack of cultural awareness among the American soldiers. The United States, he argues, seems to have the mentality to get in, get the job done, and get out as quickly as possible, leaving little room or patience for building relationships. He believes that the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program is an underutilized resource that could improve U.S. CIMIC operations. Using FAOs to train and prepare soldiers with cultural information and sensitivity will be invaluable among soldiers who are traditionally among the least educated in foreign affairs and languages of the developed nations.¹¹ Much of the problems just discussed reside at the individual or small unit level. Proper training adjustments and standard operation procedure revision can alleviate the tensions experienced in many cases. Even with the best-trained soldiers and units, however, problems at the organizational level may still exist whenever military and civilian entities must work side by side.

2. Operational Civil-Military Cooperation

The potential for military involvement in CIMIC to create security concerns for humanitarian organizations and NGOs has been understood and addressed since the early 1990s, when the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) began to advocate “humanitarian space,” a term that labels “the ability of humanitarian agencies to work independently and impartially without fear of attack in pursuit of the humanitarian imperative.”¹² With this principle of impartiality, humanitarian agencies can operate

¹⁰ Joelle Jenny, “Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: Finding Ways to Make It Work,” *European Security* 10 no. 2 (2001): 27, doi:10.1080/09662830108407492.

¹¹ Mockaitis, “CIMIC in Peace Operations: Kosovo,” 33–34.

¹² Franke, “The Peacebuilding Dilemma: CIMIC in Stability Operations,” 12.

among the local populations freely without political barriers constraining their work.¹³ Since the presence of the military can complicate the political and security environment, it should only be involved in humanitarian operations “where people are dying, or at risk of dying, and only the military can save them.”¹⁴

The military, however, has become accustomed to using assistance work as a means to win the hearts and minds of the locals. The military contends that the intent of the hearts-and-minds approach will result in enhanced force protection and information gathering; providing humanitarian assistance is only a means to an end. This practice has often had a negative effect of causing a misunderstanding among the locals regarding the role of humanitarian agencies and military forces. This situation has made it increasingly difficult for humanitarian groups to maintain the ability of being impartial, neutral, and independent.¹⁵ In order to avoid the potential downfalls of CIMIC, James V. Arbuckle suggests that the military could set up lines of communication and logistical support, provide medical services, establish command and control networks, and enhance protection.¹⁶ He continues to suggest that the military should not be a direct intervention tool in relief efforts, and cannot be an offensive force in a humanitarian operation.¹⁷

Experts argue that in the humanitarian circumstances where the military must get involved, CIMIC can be more effective without negative side effects if there is a clear line of duties drawn between the actions of the military and the civilian agencies. This line should be drawn to utilize each entity’s strengths without encroaching on the blurry situations previously described. Drawing that line seems to be one of the more difficult tasks to accomplish in a humanitarian operation.

Dr. Chris Seiple, a former NPS student, recognized these issues and compared four humanitarian interventions conducted by the U.S. military in his 1996 book, *The*

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Franke, “The Peacebuilding Dilemma: CIMIC in Stability Operations,” 12.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ James V. Arbuckle, “Analysis: No Job for a Soldier?” *NATO Review* (2007), http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2007/Military_civilian_divide/No_Job_Soldier/EN/index.htm.

¹⁷ Ibid.

U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions.¹⁸ His work examined the operational interaction between NGOs and the U.S. military during four specific humanitarian interventions between 1991 and 1994: Operation Provide Comfort, Operation Sea Angel, Operation Restore Hope, and Operation Support Hope. Seiple chose these operations to analyze because the need that existed in each situation was greater than the capabilities of the local and international humanitarian response community could handle by themselves, thus forcing the U.S. military to get involved. Each operation demonstrates the level of preparedness that existed within the U.S. military to communicate and coordinate with its interagency and non-governmental partners.

As we will see, the complexities and dimensions that exist, particularly between NGOs and the U.S. military, during modern humanitarian interventions have always existed. It may be impossible, therefore, to formulate a single comprehensive model that will provide a fail-safe preparatory program for conducting humanitarian operations. Seiple concluded that, “None of these cases will ever be repeated; none should be cast in bronze nor held up as holy writ.”¹⁹

He attempted to discover similarities among those interventions that led to successful interaction. He also identified possible areas for improvement for future operations. Seiple’s conclusion suggests that NGO/Military coordination and collaboration should happen prior to the intervention. If it cannot happen before the intervention, it needs to take place at the immediate beginning as quickly as possible.²⁰ The NGOs need to have a system in place in the states or on mutual training grounds where they can become a regular part of the interagency planning process and create continuing dialogue. Unfortunately, a comprehensive response effort is fundamentally against the nature of many NGOs. Normally, non-profit organizations build their reputation—and funding—by showing current and potential donors “their work” they are

¹⁸ Chris Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, (The U.S. Army War College, 1996), https://globalengage.org/attachments/429_Seiple-%20The%20U.S.%20Military-NGO%20Relationship%20in%20Humanitarian%20Interventions.pdf.

¹⁹ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 193.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 200.

accomplishing around the world. A comprehensive response, however, becomes a necessity when the scope of a humanitarian response exceeds the capabilities of any one organization.²¹

The context of the interagency dialogue, Seiple clarifies, is not as important as the actual existence of the dialogue. Each humanitarian response will be different, thus a pre-intervention coordination plan of effort cannot always be thoroughly created, but, “the expression of how each community understands the others expectations and needs” is the essential byproduct of interagency dialogue.²² Organizations and agencies preparing for the eventual humanitarian response need to come together early and often to update one another on their respective capabilities, limits, and intentions, as well as to establish mutual definitions for terms such as “security” and “success.”²³

Seiple then moves to discuss the operational perspective to the political situation. He encourages the military and the NGOs, “to work together against a common enemy: a potentially inattentive stateside political apparatus.”²⁴ While settling on mutual definitions of terms, the NGOs must take the lead on defining what “success” looks like. Long after the military departs, the NGOs will remain on scene for an indefinite amount of time. Each entity in a humanitarian operation must understand their role in a continuum of effort to achieve victory over the political enemy and find “success” in the humanitarian operation. The military and NGOs will each have their own particular set of tasks and missions within the operation. The NGO/military relationship at the operational level must be synergistic and united in acknowledging that the primary focus of effort must be toward achieving the mutual humanitarian goals.²⁵ When all entities understand this concept, they will work together complimenting each other according to their comparative advantage. The military must avoid the political entanglement by succumbing to the NGOs’ definition of success and properly placing itself within the

²¹ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 200.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 200-1.

²⁴ Ibid., 200.

²⁵ Ibid., 201.

overall continuum. The military must understand that its end-state has one sole purpose: to effectively transition to the next phase of recovery and depart. Seiple states, “The military’s mission is to enable marginal self-sufficiency,” for the NGOs and eventually the local population.²⁶

For the military’s role in achieving the NGOs’ vision of success, Seiple lists three basic precepts. The first, which may be the most difficult for military leaders to grasp, is that the military cannot be in charge.²⁷ The military must avoid placing itself in a position where the solutions to issues that arise are solved through their vast means. Multiple operational and political issues will occur if the military’s means are too involved in providing solutions. If any stage of the humanitarian effort relied on the military to continue, withdrawal will result in a vacuum of resources and the situation may quickly regress. Seiple states, “At all costs, the military must not provide solutions that inherently rely on military hardware and infrastructure.”²⁸

The second precept is the understanding that the military is there to help the NGOs, and not the other way around. The military is only there to help overcome specific hurdles along the humanitarian continuum. Understanding that the NGOs are the cultural and humanitarian experts who will remain on the ground until the very end will help prevent the military from instituting military infrastructure-based solutions.²⁹

The final precept suggests that the military’s operational focus of effort must be the CMOC.³⁰ This center must remain an operations center and avoid being a simple hub for liaison officers. The NGOs and the military need a one-stop shop for decision-making and problem resolutions face to face. The military operations center must be in full support of the CMOC and not the other way around. The CMOC must be elevated to a high level of importance within the military culture. The best people need to work there, people with decision-making abilities and authority. Seiple also stresses that the transition

²⁶ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 201.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 202.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

process must be at the center of CMOC discussion. Planning and preparing for the transition and departure of the military must begin on day one inside the CMOC.³¹

The last operational point Seiple shares is that the NGO/military relationship has more to do with people than institutions.³² The face-to-face coordination between a handful of people will always be more important and decisive in a humanitarian operation than all the education and information available.

Seiple suggested that the NGO/military relationship was a fundamental trait during his time and in the future era of humanitarian operations. He suggested that, “interagency/multinational coordination will only increase, and ... the role of civilians in military operations, no matter how pure the ‘battlefield,’ will also only increase.”³³ Seiple predicted that the future would depend on a unity of effort between the military and NGOs, and the interaction between the two is inevitable. It is the responsibility of both communities to develop a unity of effort in understanding and developing this relationship on a continuous basis and preferable prior to reaching the field.

3. Proposed Solutions

Other experts, in addition to Seiple, have examined military and civilian humanitarian interaction for decades over numerous cases. Many lessons learned have been developed that echo and build on Seiple’s recommendations, while others offer their views from differing perspectives. The primary lessons uncovered by studies of previous humanitarian crises suggest that all entities need to communicate extensively and work together with respect and understanding for one another’s capabilities and strengths brought to any given operation. Some authors proclaim that for this to occur, CIMIC must be taken seriously from the beginning of any operation to avoid waste and casualties related to humanitarian responses. Early and thorough cooperation and training will ensure that the military and humanitarian assets are understood and fully utilized by each

³¹ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 203.

³² *Ibid.*, 205.

³³ *Ibid.*, 208.

other. Prior education and joint training for both the military and civilian organization will mitigate many of the issues that face the military's involvement in CIMIC.

Reinforcing the idea of mutual training grounds, Nick Spence suggests that NGOs and militaries conduct same-site training designed to identify and capitalize on their respective capacities.³⁴ Together, the multiple actors will develop an agreed upon end state and then design a detailed plan, which will focus their talents on accomplishing the mission. Spence admits that a number of organizations, including military units, have already begun training in various CIMIC related activities, but he argues that until this training is available and a mandatory requirement for all participants in a CIMIC operation, operational success will continue to be difficult to accomplish.³⁵ Spence adds that training programs will also increase the mutual understanding of the ethos and values each organization holds. This understanding will in turn enable better collaboration and communication during training and actual operations.³⁶

Understanding the ethos and values of humanitarian organizations will help the military respect “humanitarian space” and its principles of impartiality and neutrality. Some authors also suggest that the path to more effective CIMIC lies in the understanding that the end-state of CIMIC goes beyond the actions and efforts of militaries and organizations on the ground. Arbuckle concludes that, “In a democracy, the military does not design policy—it executes it. A political and diplomatic failure to resolve these issues means that civilian and military workers must rise to these challenges on the streets and in the fields of conflicts.”³⁷ In order to give CIMIC a hope at being effective, political and diplomatic leaders must do their part and raise their awareness of the challenges facing the military and the nation in the future. Franke writes, “In November 2005, recognizing the growing importance of peacebuilding missions, the U.S. Department of Defense issued Directive 3000.05 elevating stability operations to ‘core

³⁴ Nick Spence, “EYEWITNESS—Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies: More than a Field Application,” *International Peacekeeping* 9, no. 1 (2002): 167, doi:10.1080/14002699.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Arbuckle, “Analysis: No Job for a Soldier?”

U.S. military missions’ and giving it ‘priority comparable to combat operations.’”³⁸ This Directive is an important step but many believe it is not enough. As a democratic nation, the military must rely on the policymakers to give them the resources required to make CIMIC a success. The increasing numbers of stability operations around the world suggest the need for the military to incorporate stability operations extensively into planning and training exercises. Franke reiterates, “The directive specifies the need to identify stability operations capabilities and assess their development; develop stability operations joint doctrine in consultation with relevant U.S. departments and agencies, foreign governments and security forces, international organizations, NGOs, and members of the private sector.”³⁹

C. POTENTIAL HYPOTHESES

One seemingly important factor in a successful humanitarian intervention is that thorough coordination and communication must exist between military and non-military actors. Francis Kofi Abiew writes that, “The intense field experience of the past few years has tended to reveal the fact that effectiveness of contemporary peace operations will depend on the collaboration of military and civilian actors.”⁴⁰

A civil military operations center or its equivalent has been used for militaries, civilian organizations, and government leaders to coordinate and facilitate humanitarian responses. The actions that take place at the CMOC or its equivalent have evolved over the past two decades, but have often proved insufficient. The next step in developing coordination efforts must happen prior to the humanitarian response. The military and non-governmental organizations are experts in their respective fields. Coming together to

³⁸ Franke, “The Peacebuilding Dilemma: CIMIC in Stability Operations,” 12.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Francis Kofi Abiew, *From Civil Strife to Civic Society: NGO-Military Cooperation in Peace Operations*, The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs Occasional Paper No.39, (Ottawa, Centre for Security and Defence Studies, 2003), 7, <http://www3.carleton.ca/csds/docs/occasionalpapers/npsia-39.pdf>.

support a humanitarian response, however, exposes differences in each of their trainings and preparations for anticipated operations. These differences create conflict and misunderstanding among the various entities participating in a response and result in a steep learning curve at the onset of an operation. The teams must use valuable time in the field and at the CMOC to learn each other's operational cultures, strengths, and standard operating procedures before they can effectively synchronize efforts. Although this thesis will identify multiple "fixes" to the problem of making humanitarian response operations more effective, it will suggest a specific civil-military joint training and unit restructuring to accommodate CIMIC prior to and during an actual humanitarian operation. This thesis will also examine what communication and coordination systems are currently in place with recommendations on how to make them more efficient and effective.

D. RESEARCH DESIGN

This thesis analyzes three humanitarian response operations that employed extensive CIMIC since the turn of the century. These three case studies are compared with each other to determine successes and failures associated with the interaction that existed between the U.S. military and NGOs involved in each operation. These primary cases are also compared with the four case studies from the early 1990s used by Dr. Seiple to determine any useful similarities or identify significant CIMIC developments over the past 25 years.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis includes five chapters. Following the introduction, chapters II, III, and IV, examine three U.S. military humanitarian operations that have occurred since 1996: "Operation Unified Assistance" (Indonesia), "Operation Unified Response" (Haiti), and "Operation United Assistance" (West Africa). Chapter V looks at Seiple's findings and identifies the progress made in CIMIC, particularly after 1996, and then offers suggestions on the way forward.

By introducing the general observations and suggestions in the field in addition to Seiple's findings, this thesis begins with a solid baseline for post-cold war humanitarian interventions. As this thesis compares the modern cases of chapters II, III, and IV against Seiple's and other's findings, it shows progress, changes, repeated mistakes, and repeated successes over the past 25 years, which will help U.S. Military, U.S. Government, and NGO leaders design more effective humanitarian operational procedures and strategies for the future.

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II. OPERATION UNIFIED ASSISTANCE

An earthquake registering 9.1 on the Richter scale occurred on the Indian Ocean floor near the west coast of Sumatra, Indonesia, on 26 December 2004. The earthquake created a massive tsunami that rippled outward toward the entire Indian Ocean rim. India, Sir Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia suffered the most damage from the giant wave; however, the effects of the tsunami were felt in Africa nearly 3000 miles away. The destruction resulted in nearly 230,000 deaths and an additional 2 million left without necessities and shelter.⁴¹ Indonesia suffered the most devastation, and became the epicenter of a global humanitarian response. Additional areas of increased focus existed in Sir Lanka and Thailand. The United States Pacific Command (PACOM) responded with the initiation of Operation Unified Assistance (OUA) to provide assistance and lifesaving support to the effected populations.⁴² Many countries including Russia, France, Malaysia, Australia, Singapore, and others joined the response along with hundreds of International government and non-government organizations to form Combined Support Force 536 (CSF-536).⁴³

Following the sudden and immense destruction caused by the earthquake and resulting tsunami, thousands of personnel converged in the area representing hundreds of organizations to provide relief and ease the suffering. The nature of the situation in the region immediately following the aftermath of the sudden onset disaster required that an effective structure of communication and coordination be set up as quickly as possible to handle the large impending influx of response personnel across multiple affected countries. The complexities and capabilities required to manage the communication and coordination necessary fell on the only organization at the time capable of doing so, the

⁴¹ Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Office of History *With Compassion and Hope: The Story of Operation Unified Assistance, The Air Force Support for Tsunami Relief Operations in Southeast Asia, 25 December 2004–15 February 2005*, Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, January 2006, 1–4, <http://www.afhra.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-100129-095.pdf>.

⁴² Dorsett, David J. "Tsunami! Information Sharing in the Wake of Destruction." *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 39 (2005): 12, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/203706671?accountid=12702>.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 13.

U.S. military.⁴⁴ This chapter will review the humanitarian interaction and subsequent lessons learned during Operation Unified Assistance by the Department of Defense, the State Department, and International and Non-Governmental Organizations.

A. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESPONSE

The PACOM Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance set up a dedicated mission command center at its Hawaii headquarters to lead the strategic civil-military coordination efforts. PACOM also responded operationally by setting up Joint Task Force (JTF)-536 in Utapao, Thailand, using units from its Okinawa based 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF).⁴⁵ Following an initial assessment of the resources and capabilities the response would require, PACOM realized that their response would need to increase dramatically. The Bonhomme Richard Expeditionary Strike Group and the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group received orders to proceed directly to the disaster area. In addition to the support by sea, PACOM deployed over 100 aircraft to provide land-based transportation for response commodities and personnel and to conduct reconnaissance flights to assess and map the areas of destruction.⁴⁶

Two Disaster Relief Assessment Teams (DRATs) arrived in the area on 29 December to evaluate the hardest hit areas in Sri Lanka and Thailand. The following day, a DRAT team arrived in Indonesia to conduct damage assessments there.⁴⁷ The DRATs with help from multiple Navy P-3 surveillance aircraft were able to assess the extent of the damage and submit formal requests for assistance.⁴⁸ The assessment teams then transitioned to a support and coordination function, and they began coordinating with the

⁴⁴ Neil Joyce, "Civilian-Military Coordination in the Emergency Response in Indonesia," *Military Medicine* 171, no. 10 (2006): 67, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/217075123?accountid=12702>.

⁴⁵ Bruce A. Elleman, *Waves of Hope: The U.S. Navy's Response to the Tsunami of Northern Indonesia*, Newport Papers no. 28, (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, February 2007), 8–9, http://www.ibrarian.net/navon/paper/N_AVA_L_WAR_COLLEGE_NEWPORT_PAPERS.pdf?paperid=5560779.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴⁷ Robert Loughran, *Who's in Charge Here?: Civil-Military Coordination in Humanitarian Assistance*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, April 2008), 5, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a484299.pdf>.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

governments and militaries of the affected countries. As additional team members and organizations arrived to support, the DRATs formed Combined Support Groups (CSGs) to conduct formal communication and coordination within their respective geographical areas.⁴⁹

The Combined Coordination Center (CCC) began operations in Thailand on 2 January 2005 shortly after III MEF commander Lt Gen Robert Blackman arrived on scene and took command of JTF-536.⁵⁰ The CCC, located at the JTF HQ, served as the relief effort's primary coordination center and oversaw the activities of the CSGs. The JTF grew substantially in the early hours of its existence to the extent that it was renamed the Combined Support Force (CSF)-536 to illustrate and recognize the diversity of entities represented in the overall effort.⁵¹ Although led by a U.S. commander, CSF-536 consisted of members from eleven foreign militaries and multiple representatives from various U.S. Country Teams and UN agencies.⁵²

The U.S. military provided leadership and infrastructure at the operational level in the disaster response operations, but also provided significant tactical level support at the hardest hit areas throughout the region. The USS Abraham Lincoln acted as a forward operating sea base off the Coast of Sumatra Island, which was at the core of the relief effort.⁵³ The damaged infrastructure of the area could not support the intentions and objectives of many NGOs trying to reach those affected the worst. United States military helicopters transported NGO personnel and supplies to the hard-to-reach areas while the Lincoln served as a hosting and coordinating center for NGO and transportation representatives.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Loughran, *Who's in Charge Here*, 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Dorsett, "Tsunami!," 13.

⁵² Charles Daly, *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Communications for the 21st Century*, (Newport, RI: Naval War College, May 2007), 7, <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a470757.pdf>.

⁵³ Loughran, *Who's in Charge Here*, 6–7.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

At the peak of operations, the U.S. military response effort included 26 ships, over 100 aircraft and 16,000 U.S. military personnel. Estimates suggest that the U.S. military provided nearly half a million gallons of fresh water and transported 10 million pounds of food and supplies.⁵⁵ The CSGs in Thailand and Sri Lanka completed their operations by the end of January, and the CSG in Indonesia ended operations on 10 February.⁵⁶ The CSF continued to coordinate the transition until 24 February, which officially marked the end of U.S. military involvement in the response.⁵⁷

B. STATE DEPARTMENT AND INTERAGENCY RESPONSE

The initial planning and coordination that took place within the U.S. government began amongst senior agency personnel, overseen by the National Security Council. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) immediately tasked its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to send multiple Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) to the affected countries and conduct health, sanitation, and housing assessments. In Washington, OFDA also began operating a 24-hour response center to begin coordinating the USG relief efforts, as well as receive the reports coming in from the DARTs on scene.⁵⁸ The OFDA also sent a liaison effort to Hawaii to assist in civil-military coordination at the PACOM mission center.⁵⁹

The United States and the American ambassadors responsible for the countries in the affected area immediately recognized the extensiveness of the disaster and pledged financial support. Initial contributions included \$400,000 by the ambassadors and an additional \$4 million from the U.S. government in support of the Red Cross.⁶⁰ The

⁵⁵ The White House, President George W. Bush, accessed October 20, 2015, <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/tsunami/>

⁵⁶ Loughran, *Who's in Charge Here*, 7–8.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁵⁸ Tarantino, Dave. "Asian Tsunami Relief: Department of Defense Public Health Response: Policy and Strategic Coordination Considerations." *Military Medicine* 171, no. 10 (10, 2006): 15. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/217070039?accountid=12702>.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, *Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunami: Humanitarian Assistance and Relief Operations*, by Rhoda Margesson, RL32715 (February, 2005), 17.

funding committed to the response by the United States increased substantially following the DARTs' dire assessments. Estimates suggest that by the end of the humanitarian mission, the United States committed over \$908 million in aid and reconstruction funding.⁶¹

Following the initial assessments, the USG immediately pushed emergency relief supplies from strategic military and civilian caches to the affected region. The senior USG representatives then reached out to the multitude of entities involved including the UN, host nation agencies, and other major players to begin immediate communication and coordination efforts.⁶² Together with the UN, the OFDA helped establish a local Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) in Banda Aceh to serve as the center of interagency coordination.⁶³

C. INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION RESPONSE

The international community played a significant role in 2004 Indonesian tsunami response. Hundreds of NGOs expressed a willingness to participate in the life-saving and recovery efforts throughout the affected region.⁶⁴ But, the international response was so extensive that coordination and communication between all the actors was difficult.

The United Nations assumed official responsibility for coordinating the activities of the international community, but found difficulty being effective due to the multitude of UN agencies overlapping in the area. Carsten Volz noted that at one point there were “72 coordination meetings per week in Banda Aceh alone.”⁶⁵ Since many of the smaller

⁶¹ United States Government Accountability Office, *Foreign Assistance: USAID Has Begun Tsunami Reconstruction in Indonesia and Sri Lanka, but Key Projects May Exceed Initial Cost and Schedule Estimates*, (Washington, DC: April, 2006), <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-06-488>.

⁶² Tarantino, “Asian Tsunami Relief,” 15.

⁶³ John Telford, John Cosgrave, and Rachel Houghton, *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami: Synthesis Report*, (London: Tsunami Evaluation Coalition, 2006): 62, http://www.sida.se/contentassets/1756188e06354b6286c76aeb0afdaf2e/joint-evaluation-of-the-international-response-to-the-indian-ocean-tsunami_3141.pdf.

⁶⁴ Carsten Volz, “Coordination in Indonesia: an NGO viewpoint,” *FMR Special Issue: Tsunami: Learning from the Humanitarian Response*, (July 2005): 26.

⁶⁵ Volz, “Coordination in Indonesia,” 26–7.

NGOs did not have the resources or personnel to attend the numerous meetings, their absence further amplified the coordination problem. Recognizing the difficulty in disseminating all the necessary information, the UN organized a Humanitarian Information Center (HIC) to gather and organize information so humanitarian agencies could stay better informed.⁶⁶

The internal coordination within the NGO community struggled as well to be efficient and effective. Initially, the larger NGOs tried to hold weekly informal meetings to improve collaboration. Eventually, CARE, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and The International Council of Voluntary Agencies formalized the NGO coordination meetings.⁶⁷

D. OBSERVATIONS

Reaching out to the numerous NGOs spread across the region was a difficult task for every coordination center. The UN's IASC saw its efforts to coordinate the effort challenged along with the U.S. military in its CCC. PACOM officials report that only a handful of NGO representatives participated in their coordination meetings between themselves, UN agencies, U.S. Country Teams, and others.⁶⁸ The UN's IASC did not have any formal authority over any other response entities; therefore, the attendance at its coordination meetings was voluntary, and sparsely attended.⁶⁹

In an effort to reach more relief personnel, the U.S. military quickly realized that its use of unique communication systems and the SIPR-net was counterproductive. The exclusive use of an unclassified compatible network was necessary. The Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN), was the best available system for communication between militaries, government agencies, and civilians. APAN is a website developed and funded

⁶⁶ Volz, "Coordination in Indonesia," 26.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Daly, *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Communications for the 21st Century*, 7.

⁶⁹ Telford, Cosgrave, Houghton, *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami*, 62.

by PACOM to promote communication and collaboration regarding security issues in the Asia-Pacific Area. The network, however, was not perfect and many still experienced problems using it.⁷⁰

Additional gaps that existed between the military and NGOs included political perceptions and impartiality. The reluctance of NGOs to work with the U.S. military and other military entities for fear of losing their concept of impartiality is a coordination issue that exists in nearly every major humanitarian response.

Along with the reluctance to work with militaries, the small number of NGOs present in Indonesia prior to the tsunami delayed both civilian and military assessment capabilities early in the disaster response. There was a general lack of adequate and timely assessments early in the relief process. Further compounding the assessment problem, the military and NGOs were reluctant to share what little assessment information they had gathered with each other, often resulting in duplicative assessments.⁷¹

Due to either personal ambitions or the lack of coordination systems in place some NGOs after making their individual assessments acted without prior coordination, and began delivering aid to locations and people already supported.⁷² These actions further complicated an already crowded relief effort making the situation on the ground more chaotic. In any relief effort, physical space for relief supplies is limited and valuable. Unorganized arrival and delivery of commodities will delay essential logistical functions and impede the rapid response required.⁷³

⁷⁰ Daly, *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Communications for the 21st Century*, 8.

⁷¹ Telford, Cosgrave, Houghton, *Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami*, 100.

⁷² Gary W. Anderson, "Interagency Overseas: Responding to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami," in *Mismanaging Mayhem*, ed. James Jay Carafano and Richard Weitz (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2008), 197.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

E. THE WAY FORWARD

This case suggests that early efforts to consolidate coordination between the U.S. military, USG, UN, NGOs, and the host nations are essential for rapid and efficient disaster relief efforts.⁷⁴ All parties being able to access a compatible communication network is the first step in streamlining coordination efforts. In order to communicate in a digital world, all parties must have access to the same virtual networks.⁷⁵ The multiple layers of UN coordination efforts and the resultant delays could have been minimized if the U.S. military and the entire international response operated on a universal and unclassified communications network. Developing a network capable of secure and reliable communication across all parties continues to be an unsolved issue. Until resolved, the most humanitarian leaders can do to minimize this hurdle is understand the limits of existing networks and anticipate the challenges and associated workarounds from the beginning.

Robert Loughran suggests that the PACOM commander of the OUA serves as a model for future missions by demonstrating a positive humanitarian military leadership characteristic by emphasizing and maintaining a supporting role to USAID in the response.⁷⁶ Maintaining a supporting role is required to ensure a smooth and quick transition and exit of U.S. military forces. From the very beginning, U.S. forces must focus on building the capacities and abilities of the host nation agencies and NGOs. The mission must revolve around an effort to reach self-sustainment as quickly as possible to avoid a large-scale military dependency.⁷⁷ In the end, both military and civilian humanitarian agencies must accept that they are not there to run the response effort. International agencies respond to assist local and national communities in reestablishing their own capacity for self-sufficiency.⁷⁸ Neil Joyce, writing for the Journal of AMSUS, argued, “Aid can backfire, create dependency, and cause additional hardship if aid

⁷⁴ Volz, “Coordination in Indonesia,” 26.

⁷⁵ Loughran, *Who’s in Charge Here*, 16–17.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 17.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Joyce, “Civilian-Military Coordination in the Emergency Response in Indonesia.” 67.

agencies insist on bringing their goods, their equipment, their programs, and their expertise, rather than promoting local capacity, leadership, and resources.”⁷⁹ One of the lessons from this case is that right from the beginning of any humanitarian response, leaders from all parties must be planning for a successful transition from a largely military led early stage, to a civilian led end game.

This case has also shown that military leaders should have a general awareness while working with NGOs that there will be a different experience in each situation. NGOs are not all the same and each has its own respective established principles and ethics regarding issues such as communicating and working with military organizations. Understanding these principles, along with the various capabilities, resources, and objectives of NGOs will help military leaders anticipate coordination challenges that will exist.⁸⁰ Commanders must also understand the civil-military cooperation works both ways. While the missions of the military and civilians will usually differ, both can benefit from each other to accomplish their respective objectives. For example, military capabilities can grant access for civilians to remote populations in distress and provide security. Conversely, civilians can help legitimize military efforts among local populations and provide a quicker exit strategy previously discussed.⁸¹ Neil Joyce proclaims, “Despite cross-cultural issues and competition for recognition, there can be valuable teamwork that allows each of us to do our best in difficult situations.”⁸²

⁷⁹ Joyce, “Civilian-Military Coordination in the Emergency Response in Indonesia.” 67.

⁸⁰ Loughran, *Who’s in Charge Here*, 16.

⁸¹ Joyce, “Civilian-Military Coordination in the Emergency Response in Indonesia.” 70.

⁸² Ibid.

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III. OPERATION UNIFIED RESPONSE

On January 12, 2010, Haiti experienced an earthquake that ranks among the deadliest in history. Measuring 7.0 on the Richter scale, the 2010 Earthquake killed over 230,000 and left an additional 300,000 injured. It destroyed or damaged nearly 300,000 structures, including 14 of 16 government ministry buildings and the presidential palace.⁸³ The destruction that occurred within a few minutes left the capital city and parts of the country in ruins. The surviving Government of Haiti (GoH) officials had limited resources and capabilities to deal with the devastation. They made an immediate request for U.S. and international assistance. The United States responded, which resulted in one of the longest and largest foreign disaster relief operations the U.S. military has ever been a part of.

The response package directed by President Barack Obama included a “whole-of-government” response with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) in the lead.⁸⁴ U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) led the military’s mission in the response. SOUTHCOM deputy commander LTG P.K. Keen was already on the ground in Haiti visiting the U.S. Ambassador during the earthquake and established Joint Task Force-Haiti (JTF-H) within two days, immediately assuming responsibility for all U.S. forces in support of Operation Unified Response. The operation provided humanitarian assistance (HR) and disaster relief (DR) until JTF-H concluded operations on June 1, 2010.⁸⁵

The appropriate and effective communication and coordination between the U.S. military, U.S. Government agencies, and the hundreds of non-governmental organizations were essential to the effectiveness of the mission. Necessary for a unity of

⁸³ Gary Cecchine, Forrest E. Morgan, Michael A. Wermuth, Timothy Jackson, Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Matthew Stafford, *The U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake: Considerations for Army Leaders*, Washington, DC, The RAND Corporation, accessed November 2, 2015, 1, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR304/RAND_RR304.pdf.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 2.

⁸⁵ P.K. Keen, Matthew G. Elledge, Charles W. Nolan, and Jennifer L. Kimmey, “Foreign Disaster Response: Joint Task Force-Haiti Observations,” *Military Review* (NOV-DEC 2010), 85, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20101231_art015.pdf.

effort among the major entities in the response, all the supporting organizations needed to share a humanitarian common operational picture and synchronize their individual humanitarian assistance efforts. Communicating and coordinating across a nation devastated by an earthquake is a complex and difficult task requiring each major entity to play a particular role in the interaction necessary in Haiti. This chapter will review the humanitarian interaction and subsequent lessons learned during Operation Unified Response by the Department of Defense, the State Department, and International and Non-Governmental Organizations.

A. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE RESPONSE

Militaries and organizations from around the world responded to ease the suffering taking place in Haiti following the deadly 2010 earthquake. The United States was only one of many countries—including the UK, Canada, Brazil, the Dominican Republic, Cuba and others⁸⁶—that contributed to the cause, and the DOD was only a single aspect of the U.S. response effort. The U.S. military, however, provided the largest contribution of personnel and capabilities in support of the Haitian people.⁸⁷

Operation Unified Response officially started on January 14, 2010, but within hours following the earthquake, the U.S. military had already received orders and began necessary preparations and movement to support. Since the onset of the crisis was so sudden and the magnitude so intense, DOD did not undergo the formal process⁸⁸ of assessing the situation with a humanitarian assistance survey team (HAST). The JTF-H commander made the initial assessment based on his own experience and intuition and immediately requested the use of the U.S. Army's XVIII Airborne Corps' assault command post (ACP).⁸⁹ He also directed the Air Force Special Operations Command

⁸⁶ "Haiti Earthquake Aid Pledged by Country," *The Guardian*, last updated 14 January 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/jan/14/haiti-quake-aid-pledges-country-donations>.

⁸⁷ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 32.

⁸⁸ Joint Publication 3–29 Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2014, 20-21.

⁸⁹ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 34.

(AFSOC) 1 Special Operations Wing (SOW) to send a Special Tactics Squadron (STS) to reestablish flight operations at the heavily damaged Toussaint Louverture International Airport.

Prior to the operation officially beginning, the DOD had already ordered multiple U.S. Navy ships and the U.S. Army's Global Response Force (GRF) to support the response. The joint force headquarters (JFHQ) was established on 13 January 2010 and started receiving units within 48 hours after the earthquake. The U.S. military response ultimately consisted of over 22,000 service members, 58 aircraft, and 23 vessels.⁹⁰

Joint Task Force-Haiti organized its Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) to streamline coordination between itself and the countless multinational, intergovernmental, and NGO partners. The name HACC can be misleading as the members of the center did not all work in the same place. Many of the HACC members interacted directly with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) at the U.S. embassy in Port-au-Prince to conduct coordination and liaison activities with many of the U.S. governmental agencies involved. The rest of the HACC personnel coordinated efforts with the UN Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and other international organizations at the UN Logistics Base. At the UN Logistics Base, HACC members served as one of many entities that formed the UN cluster system.⁹¹ The HACC located at the UN Logistics Base was integrated with the Joint Operations and Tasking Center (JOTC), which served as the hub for logistical support requests by various humanitarian organizations.⁹²

⁹⁰ Keen, Elledge, Nolan, and Kimmey, "Foreign Disaster Response," 85.

⁹¹ The UN designed its cluster system to define, separate, and maximize the responsibilities and roles of various functional areas within the overall disaster response. There are currently 11 clusters that make up the system: logistics; nutrition; emergency shelter; camp management and coordination; health; protection; agriculture; emergency telecommunications; early recovery; education; and water, sanitation, and hygiene. Representatives and specialists from all the organizations involved in a response meet together on a regular basis to coordinate their efforts and create a forum for support and idea exchange.

⁹² Thomas Kirsch, Lauren Sauer, and Debarati Guha Sapir, "Analysis of the International and U.S. Response to the Haiti Earthquake: Recommendations for Change," *Disaster Medicine and Public Health Preparedness*, vol. 6, no. 3 (October, 2012), 203.

B. STATE DEPARTMENT AND INTERAGENCY RESPONSE

After President Obama pledged full support to the Haitian government, he designated USAID as the lead federal agency to handle the U.S. response. The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) within USAID began operating a response management team (RMT) in Washington to direct political coordination. It then designated a disaster assistance response team (DART) to begin coordinating the response from within Haiti.⁹³ Due to the size of the U.S. response and the number of government agencies involved, an interagency task force in Washington and a new USAID Office of the Response Coordinator (ORC) in Haiti were set up to handle the multitude of U.S. governmental entities involved.⁹⁴ Secretary of State Hilary Clinton appointed counselor and chief of staff Cheryl Mills to lead the overall effort due to her continued work on a Haitian development strategy. Her first action was to establish an emergency operations center and multiple task forces to coordinate with other U.S. agencies and international organizations.⁹⁵ Many U.S. government agencies that would not normally be involved in a foreign disaster response played significant roles in the humanitarian effort. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), and FEMA along with others all supported the mission. FEMA established a National Response Coordination Center (NRCC)—a center normally reserved for domestic coordination—to assist the USAID administrator in leading the Interagency Task Force.⁹⁶

C. INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION RESPONSE

The international contribution to the Haiti earthquake disaster response included more participants and funds than any historical response to a natural disaster. Many

⁹³ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 23.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 23; Kirsch, Sauer, and Sapir, “Analysis of the International and U.S. Response to the Haiti Earthquake,” 204.

⁹⁵ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 25–26.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 26.

NGOs were already in Haiti prior to the earthquake in support of the desolate state, but the number of organizations in Haiti grew substantially following the earthquake. The UN cluster system struggled to manage and coordinate with all the NGOs. Several lead NGOs, including InterAction and International Council of Voluntary Agencies, established a NGO coordination support office to try to enhance coordination and effectiveness.⁹⁷ Estimates suggest that more than 140 countries and between 500 and 2000 NGOs contributed to the relief effort in Haiti.⁹⁸

D. OBSERVATIONS

With so many actors in the area, the humanitarian response quickly became congested and confusing. A key determining factor of success in a disaster response is how well all the players communicate with one another. Communication in a disaster response will operate more efficiently if the players already have established relationships prior to meeting in the field. Fortunately, the international community had been present for multiple decades helping and supporting the impoverished people of Haiti, thus many functioning relationships between the United States, the UN, and the government of Haiti already existed.⁹⁹

At the UN Logistics Base, the MINUSTAH Joint Operations and Tasking Center (JOTC) became the central location for routing requests from NGOs for military assistance. As a request came in, if MINUSTAH could not handle it, the U.S. military or other organizations could volunteer to assist. If the U.S. military volunteered to assist, USAID would upload the request into a Mission Tasking Matrix (MITAM) and send it to JTF-H for processing and execution.¹⁰⁰ SOUTHCOM kept the flow of information

⁹⁷ Kirsch, Sauer, and Sapir, "Analysis of the International and U.S. Response to the Haiti Earthquake," 203.

⁹⁸ Hillary Rodham Clinton, "One Year Commemoration of Haiti's Earthquake," Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, press statement, January 11, 2011, updated June 20, 2011, <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/01/154303.htm>;

Kirsch, Sauer, and Sapir, "Analysis of the International and U.S. Response to the Haiti Earthquake," 203.

⁹⁹ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 61.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 44-5.

regarding requests for military assistance at the unclassified level as much as possible to encourage information sharing and transparency.¹⁰¹ Keeping information at the unclassified level contributed to JTF-H's successful communication and coordination with NGOs and other players in the response.¹⁰²

The RAND Organization noted that the MINUSTAH JOTC model worked well in Haiti, but it is unsure if the same model will work as well in other disaster responses.¹⁰³ Multitudes of U.S. agencies, international relief organizations, and SOUTHCOM personnel were already in Haiti prior to the earthquake. The relationships and cultural understandings needed to quickly throw together an ad hoc response already existed in Haiti. Determining whether the JOTC model will work in all, or at least other, circumstances will require further evaluation and testing.

At the soldier and small unit level, some humanitarian workers noted that the JTF-H personnel seemed to be more prepared to interact with civilian agencies and local populations in Haiti than in disaster response efforts in the past. The soldiers seemed to relate well with other agencies and organizations, and they were more open and cooperative than previous humanitarian operations with civilians.¹⁰⁴ Absent of any hard evidence, many civilian personnel suggested that the experience gained from the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns prepared service members to interact and work with the various actors in Haiti.¹⁰⁵

E. THE WAY FORWARD

Incredible amounts of resources, personnel, and money went into the humanitarian response effort in Haiti. With the sheer size of the response on a small-

¹⁰¹ Keen, Elledge, Nolan, and Kimmey, "Foreign Disaster Response," 91.

¹⁰² Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 61–62.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

impoverished island nation, one should think that “building back better”¹⁰⁶ would be an easily attainable goal. Many argue, however, Haiti is a long way off from being better than before the crisis. Multiple international organizations still in Haiti report that many issues still exist, and they express concern regarding just what the \$13.5 billion response effort really accomplished.¹⁰⁷ Vijaya Ramachandran from the Center for Global Development suggests that part of the problem is the lack of accountability for relief organizations. She also observes the lack of communication between the government of Haiti and the numerous relief organizations. She said, “Right now what we’ve got is a process dominated by donors and NGOs. The government is almost a bystander.”¹⁰⁸ Other contributors to a *Humanosphere* article suggested that the problem developed in the beginning when the major players in the post-earthquake response failed to empower the government of Haiti.¹⁰⁹ As many issues continue in Haiti even today, this chapter is most interested in where did the international response—particularly the U.S. military’s interaction with others—go wrong, and how could it have been more effective?

Regardless of the situation in Haiti today, the U.S. military played a significant role in the Haitian earthquake disaster response that likely eased suffering and saved numerous lives. There are a few ways, however, that the U.S. military could have interacted with government and non-governmental organizations better. These include making a more accurate and joint initial assessment of the crisis, creating a more robust framework for communication and integration, and preparing unit leaders for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief work.

¹⁰⁶Lilianne Fan, “Disaster as Opportunity?: Building back better in Aceh, Myanmar, and Haiti,” *Humanitarian Policy Group*, November, 2013, 20, http://www.themimu.info/sites/themimu.info/files/documents/Report_Disaster_as_opportunity_HPG_Nov2013.pdf.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Knox, “5 Years After Haiti’s Earthquake, Where did the \$13.5 Billion Go?,” *NPR*, January 12, 2015, <http://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2015/01/12/376138864/5-years-after-haiti-s-earthquake-why-aren-t-things-better>; “Is Haiti Building Back Better?,” *United States Institute of Peace*, October 29, 2010, <http://www.usip.org/events/haiti-building-back-better>.

¹⁰⁸ Tom Paulson and Tom Murphy, “Three Years Later: Was the Massive Humanitarian Response in Haiti a Success?,” *Humanosphere*, Marguerite Casey Foundation, accessed November 2, 2015, <http://www.humanosphere.org/human-rights/2013/01/three-years-later-was-the-massive-humanitarian-response-in-haiti-a-success/>.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

The initial phase of the relief effort was massive, quick, and relatively unorganized.¹¹⁰ LTG Keen and the U.S. military led this surge because no other organization or agency existed that could handle such a response. The military itself was not fully prepared to manage the planning, coordinating, and tracking requirements present, which resulted in multiple logistical shortfalls. The inability of the U.S. military to conduct a formal assessment of the destruction made it impossible to determine what was needed and where. The lack of a formal assessment prevented JTF-Haiti's from developing objective standards to compare its progress against. The informal assessment also caught the JTF by surprise when loads of unnecessary provisions were shipped in without adequate space to store and prepare the goods for distribution.¹¹¹ The military's logistical system at the time was designed for internal support, which made receiving and coordinating the massive external influx of personnel, equipment, and supplies difficult.¹¹² One possible solution to ease the burden placed on the initial logistical system is to train and deploy an early-entry team to conduct joint assessments and determine requirements.¹¹³ With an accurate assessment, leaders can make the appropriate requests for supplies and personnel and avoid have too much of one commodity and not enough of another.

There have been many suggestions since the earthquake in Haiti and other natural disasters about how the United States and its military could improve the communication and coordination nightmare that exists in almost every major natural disaster requiring a robust humanitarian response. The RAND organization suggests the development of a national framework to guide and document a foreign humanitarian response.¹¹⁴ A major concern among the leaders involved in Operation Unified Response was the disconnect and misunderstandings regarding the roles and responsibilities of each agency or

¹¹⁰ Keen, Elledge, Nolan, and Kimmey, "Foreign Disaster Response," 87.

¹¹¹ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 60–61.

¹¹² Keen, Elledge, Nolan, and Kimmey, "Foreign Disaster Response," 89.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 67–68.

organization.¹¹⁵ A national framework or training program for foreign humanitarian efforts could become the center for planning, training, and conducting exercises aimed at identifying capabilities and assigning responsibilities for future humanitarian operations.¹¹⁶ As a gathering place for government, non-government, and military entities, a national framework would also foster relationship building and networking prior to arriving on scene immediately after a disaster strikes.¹¹⁷

Exercises operated by the national framework could test various models from the past under different conditions to see if the model will work elsewhere. RAND suggested that the MINUSTAH JOTC seemed to work sufficiently in Haiti, but it would need to be tested and analyzed before it becomes a model of choice for future disaster response coordination.¹¹⁸ The exercises at the national framework could verify the effectiveness of the JOTC model or explore variations to make it work in other situations.

A national framework for foreign disaster response could also become the center for a standing organization designed to streamline and bolster humanitarian and disaster response activities. A standing organization could serve multiple important functions such as developing doctrine for response activities; serving as the administrative body for planning, training, model testing; and conducting joint exercises.¹¹⁹ During an actual incident, the organization would become the center of expertise, staff augmentation, logistical coordination, and collaboration for all the players involved in the response effort.¹²⁰

Finally, at the individual and small unit level, the case of the Haiti earthquake suggests that leaders must enter a humanitarian response prepared for what they might

¹¹⁵ Keen, Elledge, Nolan, and Kimmey, "Foreign Disaster Response," 93.

¹¹⁶ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 68.

¹¹⁷ Kirsch, Sauer, and Sapir, "Analysis of the International and U.S. Response to the Haiti Earthquake," 206.

¹¹⁸ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 62.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

experience. The DOD has published multiple resources for commanders and unit representatives to educate themselves and their soldiers on humanitarian operations. The DOD also published a handbook for JTF Commanders and below in 2011 to explain the roles and responsibilities of the State Department, the U.S. military, and NGOs.¹²¹ It also lays out the disaster response process, and it gives guidance to military leaders in communicating and coordinating with foreign military and civil entities as well as NGOs. As small unit military leaders receive orders to conduct humanitarian operations, a prior familiarization to the principles and guidance in the commanders handbook will increase effective civil military interaction and improve the overall effectiveness of the unit.

¹²¹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Support to Foreign Disaster Relief* (Washington, DC, 2011).

IV. OPERATION UNITED ASSISTANCE

Early in December 2013, a Guinean boy died from an illness caused by a virus. The virus quickly spread through the porous borders of Sierra Leone and Liberia. In March 2014, researchers and doctors in the area declared that the virus was Ebola. The virus continued to spread and doctors began diagnosing individuals with Ebola throughout all of Western Africa by September 2014.¹²²

The U.S. public's anxieties grew in the face of the Ebola threat, and President Barack Obama declared the spread of Ebola as a threat to U.S. national interests on 16 September 2014.¹²³ Health officials worldwide could not deny that intervention was required to reverse the tide of outbreaks and to bolster the response capabilities of the Western African nations. President Obama stated that if the world did not act, security would erode and plunge the region into turmoil.¹²⁴

In less than a year, the Ebola virus had made its way through Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea leaving a path of death, economic degradation, and overburdened government institutions. With thousands dead and many more infected, the pandemic threatened the local region and beyond. The global response adequate to fight this global crisis required a combined effort of USG agencies, NGOs, the DOD, and additional resources from governments around the world. The President of the United States declared a "whole-of-government" response with USAID in the lead.¹²⁵ The president ordered the DOD to set up a Joint Force Command to facilitate the response effort to help stop the spread of the Ebola virus and eradicate it from the region. Operation United Assistance officially began on 16 September 2014 as a significant part of the global

¹²² David Hudson, "A Major Increase in Our Response to the Ebola Outbreak," The White House Blog, September 16, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/09/16/major-increase-our-response-ebola-outbreak>. See also the Centers for Disease control website for more information on Ebola, <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/index.html>.

¹²³ Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President on the Ebola Outbreak," (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia, September 16, 2014), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/16/remarks-president-ebola-outbreak>.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Hudson, "A Major Increase in Our Response to the Ebola Outbreak."

united response to the increasing Ebola threat. This chapter will review the humanitarian interaction and subsequent lessons learned during Operation United Assistance by the Department of Defense, the State Department, and International and Non-Governmental Organizations.

A. U.S. MILITARY RESPONSE

To initiate the U.S. military's role in the response, U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) sent a small force to Monrovia, Liberia, from U.S. Army Africa (USARAF), which is the Army Service component command (ASCC) for the region. Under the leadership and command of Maj. Gen. Darryl Williams, USARAF formed Joint Forces Command-Operation United Assistance (JFC-OUA) on 16 September 2014. The joint force's mission was to support USAID and build Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs), diagnostics labs, and a field hospital. The JTF would also train local personnel to maintain and operate the new facilities.

The JTF organized their effort into four phases: 1) Initial Entry, 2) Integration, 3) Support to USAID and 4) Transition/Redeployment.¹²⁶ The first two phases were immediately complicated due to the lack of local infrastructure and a weak local economy. The rainy season was at its peak, roads and airfields were mostly inadequate, and the political situation was fragile and unstable.¹²⁷ AFRICOM relied heavily in the early stages of the operation on its J4 team, which quickly set up an around-the-clock Joint Logistics and Deployment and Distribution Operations Centers (JLOC & DDOC).¹²⁸ Daily meetings at the operations centers eventually became unclassified to include the wide variety of non-military actors that proved to be essential to the success

¹²⁶ Jeff Reibestein, "Logistics in Support of Operation United Assistance: Teamwork, Transition and Lessons Learned," United States Africa Command, United States Department of Defense, accessed November 02, 2015, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25458/logistics-in-support-of-operation-united-assistance-teamwork-transition-and-lessons-learned>.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ United States Africa Command Directorate of Logistics, "Operation United Assistance: Logistics Partnership Success," United States Africa Command, United States Department of Defense, accessed November 02, 2015, <https://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/25102/operation-united-assistance-logistics-partnership-success>.

of the mission.¹²⁹ From the very beginning, the JFC-OUA commander planned and worked to transition his capabilities and sustainment missions to USAID and NGOs, and keeping information unclassified and involving other organizations in daily coordination meetings was important in preparing for the transition. Prior to handing the mission over to the civilian agencies, USARAF handed the effort over to the 101st Airborne Division on 25 October 2014 to continue the construction of the ETUs and train local personnel.¹³⁰ The 101st ended its operations in support of Operation United Assistance on 27 February 2015.

B. STATE DEPARTMENT AND INTERAGENCY RESPONSE

As standard practice for USG humanitarian responses, USAID took the lead for the U.S. government in providing support in West Africa.¹³¹ The agency immediately dispatched two DART teams to set up operations centers in Monrovia, Liberia, and Conakry, Guinea. As part of the DART package, personnel from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U.S. Public Health Service also traveled to the affected region and participated in the planning, administrative, and coordination operations.¹³² The DARTs became the focal point for coordination and collaboration activities between other U.S. agencies, host country governments, and NGOs.¹³³

The primary effort of USAID and the U.S. response has been to increase the number of ETUs and teams trained in proper burial techniques to contain the infection

¹²⁹ United States Africa Command Directorate of Logistics, “Operation United Assistance: Logistics Partnership Success.”

¹³⁰ U.S. Africa Command Directorate of Logistics, “Operation United Assistance: Logistics Partnership Success,” Darryl Williams, Matthew D. Koehler, Charles C. Luke II, and Christopher O. Bowers, “Operation United Assistance: The Initial Response-Setting the Conditions in the Theater,” *Military Review*, (July/August 2015): 76, http://usacac.army.mil/CAC2/MilitaryReview/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20150831_art015.pdf.

¹³¹ Department of Defense, “Press Briefing on Pentagon’s Response to the Ebola Outbreak,” (U.S. Ambassador to Liberia Debra Malac, USAID Deputy Disaster Assistance Response Team Director Ben Hemingway, and Operation United Assistance Joint Force Commander Major General (MG) Darryl A. Williams, U.S. Army, October 16, 2014), <http://www.defense.gov/News/News-Transcripts/Transcript-View/Article/606947>.

¹³² “Ebola: Get the Facts,” United States Agency for International Development, last modified October 23, 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/ebola/facts>.

¹³³ Ibid.

from spreading.¹³⁴ The USAID mission statement—“to partner to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity”¹³⁵—has extended the USAID effort beyond fighting the Ebola virus to minimizing the overall health, economic, and social impacts the crisis has on the region.¹³⁶

C. INTERNATIONAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION RESPONSE

Beginning in early 2014, Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) and multiple other NGOs increased their focus to treat the Ebola situation. Medecins Sans Frontieres set up a facility near the town of Foya in April to isolate confirmed and suspected cases. Additional NGOs did the same in other parts of the region. Sam Worthington, President of InterAction,¹³⁷ in remarks regarding the NGO contribution to the Ebola response said, “There are over 30 international NGOs operating in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea.”¹³⁸ Worthington said that the work of NGOs in the affected region has been essential in reducing the rate of infections. In addition to running Ebola treatment units, many NGOs had become involved in the burial procedures, supporting over 100 burial groups trained in the proper burial of infected bodies to prevent others from being infected. The NGO community is also essential for the outreach programs designed to locate and inform locals directly affected by the virus.¹³⁹

Week after week, there were more new cases of infection than beds available to care for the sick. The situation became bleak and by late summer, the NGO community made a plea for more international help. With the help of WHO, the governments of Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia launched a response plan in August 2014 to control the

¹³⁴ “Ebola: Get the Facts”

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ InterAction is the largest alliance of U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations.

¹³⁸ Sam Worthington, interview by the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs, *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, November 11, 2014, <http://journal.georgetown.edu/ngos-ebola-and-the-future-of-civil-actors-in-international-politics-five-minutes-with-sam-worthington/>.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

Ebola outbreak. Without a robust national healthcare system in place, the affected countries relied on NGOs and IGOs—MSF, religious groups, and WHO—to provide large-scale medical emergency responses.¹⁴⁰

D. OBSERVATIONS

By late January 2015, the U.S. military mission was near completion and President Obama approved USAID and DOD to begin transitioning the operation to other civilian and international organizations.¹⁴¹ The successful coordination between USAID and AFRICOM was in large part due to the relationship that existed prior to the event. The mutual institutional understanding shared by these two organizations in the region was rehearsed and became a key component of the quick and effective response.¹⁴² Even though the military personnel deployed to West Africa were not specially trained humanitarian and pandemic response forces, they arrived with a solid understanding of their supporting role to USAID. As one report in the military response put it, the U.S. forces overcame their training shortfalls, “performed well, and accomplished the directives laid out by USAID.”¹⁴³

The previous two case studies focused on a humanitarian response to a natural disaster. A humanitarian response to an outbreak introduces different components and includes participants that may not play regular roles in the more frequent natural disaster relief efforts. A humanitarian response revolving around a health crisis not only requires responding to needs as they arise, but also planning and prevention efforts to deal with geographically shifting priorities as the outbreak evolves.¹⁴⁴ Maintaining a reliable, accurate, and expansive communication system is essential in all disaster responses, but

¹⁴⁰ James Jay Carafano, Charlotte Florance, and Daniel Kaniewski, “The Ebola Outbreak of 2013–2014: An Assessment of U.S. Actions,” *The Heritage Foundation*, (April 2015): 7, <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2015/04/the-ebola-outbreak-of-20132014-an-assessment-of-us-actions>.

¹⁴¹ Reibestein, “Logistics in Support.”

¹⁴² Carafano, Florance, and Kaniewski, “The Ebola Outbreak of 2013–2014,” 18.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴⁴ “U.S. Military Assistance to International Health Emergency Response: Examining Frameworks for an Ebola-like Disaster in the Asia-Pacific,” (Banyan Analytics, An Anser Institute, January 29, 2015), 32, http://www.anser.org/docs/banyan_analytics/U.S._MilitaryHealthAssistance.pdf.

especially important during a health crisis. Coordinating organizations must continually disseminate information regarding the current situation on the ground, evolving trends, and new practices and procedures to the entire response to prevent ineffective efforts and counterproductive actions.¹⁴⁵

Communication and tracking among the NGO community was well organized and efficient according to InterAction President Worthington. One important aspect of that communication was that InterAction operated a geocode mapping service that automatically uploaded tracking data directly to UN databases on projects conducted by various NGOs.¹⁴⁶ The tracking service provided by InterAction helped reduce redundant taskings and optimized assignments to new NGOs arriving in the field.

Several relief organizations have developed and implemented effective communications systems to communicate amongst themselves and other similar organizations, but communicating with the local population proved to be another issue. Engaging with the local community is crucial in a medical humanitarian response. During the West African Ebola response, some communities were not aware of or did not have confidence in the effectiveness of the ETUs popping up around the region. Since many locals did not have accurate information regarding the locations and functions of the ETUs, they came up with their own solutions for treating loved ones, and disposing of infected bodies, often with dangerous results. In some areas, community representatives reported that the normal procedure was to first administer care at home with local pharmaceuticals and herbal remedies. Containing the highly infectious Ebola virus is a difficult task, especially outside of a designated care facility and without a trained team of caregivers. Health experts were concerned about the abilities of locals to be effective in handling sick patients and infected bodies, and suggested that the mishandling of patients attributed to the rapidly rising numbers of infected.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ “U.S. Military Assistance to International Health Emergency Response,” 32.

¹⁴⁶ Worthington interview.

¹⁴⁷ Sharon Alane Abramowitz, Kristen E. McLean, Sarah Lindley McKune, Kevin Louis Bardosh, Mosoka Fallah, Josephine Monger, Kodjo Tehoungue, Patricia A. Omidian, “Community-Centered Responses to Ebola in Urban Liberia: The View from Below,” *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* (2015), doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0003706.

E. THE WAY FORWARD

An after-action report conducted by Banyan Analytics found that, “Coordination for international response organizations and donor nations is important to ensure reconciliation of their different approaches and agendas toward a coordinated and focused response.”¹⁴⁸ The overall communication and coordination that took place between the U.S. military, the USG, and NGOs in West Africa continued rather smoothly throughout the operation, but could have been more efficient during the beginning of the response. A possible solution that an AFRICOM spokesperson suggested is that synchronizing communication platforms prior to an event such as the Ebola response would reduce the lag time and make information flow even smoother during the initial phases of the operation.¹⁴⁹ A lesson from this case shows that potential partners from the COCOMS, UN, USG, and NGOs need to build relationships to understand each other’s communicative systems and procedures as early as possible to be most effective.¹⁵⁰

The communication systems need to extend beyond the response organizations and be able to reach the local organizations in the heart of the crisis. During the initial phase of any operation, a primary effort needs to focus on establishing lines of communication with the affected population to ensure they understand the intent and expectations of the relief organizations. If the local population does not understand the locations and procedures for receiving relief, the effectiveness of the response is reduced.¹⁵¹

Another after action report, from The Heritage Foundation, recommended a reassessment of the U.S. military force posture to deal with large-scale humanitarian situations. The study argued that posturing soldiers and supplies closer to the most probable disaster areas will reduce reaction and travel time to initiate a response.¹⁵² The

¹⁴⁸ “U.S. Military Assistance to International Health Emergency Response,” 31.

¹⁴⁹ Reibestein, “Logistics in Support.”

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Abramowitz, McLean, McKune, Bardosh, Fallah, Monger, Tehoungue, Omidian, “Community-Centered Responses to Ebola in Urban Liberia.”

¹⁵² Carafano, Florance, and Kaniewski, “The Ebola Outbreak of 2013–2014,” 19.

report's authors acknowledge that this point is an obvious one, but they note that it is vital to ensure that the right personnel are postured appropriately.¹⁵³ Many of the personnel responding to the Ebola response had minimal training in health related issues, especially at the pandemic level. All organizations that intend to respond to a future health related disaster, like the one in West Africa, should consider an all-force joint healthcare and disease response training for their personnel postured around the globe.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Carafano, Florance, and Kaniewski, "The Ebola Outbreak of 2013–2014," 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

V. CONCLUSION

The first chapter of this thesis asked how the U.S. military and other humanitarian organizations could improve their interaction with one another during a humanitarian operation. The introduction examined ideas and literature on the topic from experts throughout the past several decades of humanitarian responses. The thesis then presented three case studies that have occurred within the past 15 years: Operation Unified Assistance in Indonesia, Operation Unified Response in Haiti, and Operation United Assistance in Western Africa. Each case study focused on the separate actions taken by the U.S. military, various U.S. government agencies, and international non-governmental organizations, particularly the communication and coordination systems and procedures each entity used to interact within and outside of its own organization.

The first case study, Operation Unified Assistance in Indonesia, explored the humanitarian response following the 9.1 magnitude earthquake and resultant tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean in 2004, devastating coastal areas in India, Sir Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia. The disaster left 230,000 dead and millions without food, water, and shelter. The global response included hundreds of government and non-government organizations.

The second case study, Operation Unified Response in Haiti, explored the humanitarian response following the devastating 7.0 earthquake that struck Haiti in 2010. The earthquake in Haiti destroyed thousands of building and injured or killed over 500,000 people. The capital of Haiti, Port-au-Prince, was left in ruins leaving the local government powerless to adequately respond. The country made an immediate request for international assistance. The humanitarian response included USAID, the U.S. military, and hundreds of other international organizations.

The final case study, Operation United Assistance, followed the outbreak and spread of the deadly Ebola virus in Western Africa and the subsequent international humanitarian effort. In March of 2014, doctors identified a rapidly spreading virus as Ebola, and within a few months, thousands were infected and dying across multiple

Western African nations. Fearful of spreading to more countries, President Barack Obama with other world leaders ordered an intervention to reverse the extensive outbreak. International health organizations teamed up with USAID, the DOD, and other IGOs and NGOs to eradicate the Ebola virus from the region.

Highlighting some recommendations that worked, did not work, and have yet to be appropriately implemented, this conclusion chapter will now compare and contrast the historical experiences and recommendations offered by experts, particularly Dr. Chris Seiple, regarding pre-2000 humanitarian responses with the case studies presented in this thesis. The chapter will then conclude with a fresh perspective on some recommendations that might improve civil-military interaction within a humanitarian response in the future.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS THEN AND NOW

Interaction between the U.S. military, the State Department, and the international non-governmental community will continue as long as humanitarian crises exist. The prevalence of natural and man-made disasters will continue to rise, and not only will the civil-military interaction continue to be present, its significance to mission success will be more important than ever as the situations grow in scale. It is the responsibility of all entities involved in a humanitarian response to work towards understanding each other's systems and capabilities, collaborating, and making the interaction work in the field. Each aspect of civil-military interaction has been studied on multiple occasions by multitudes of experts, and the list of recommendations on how to make it more effective continues to grow. This section will cover some of the most significant issues—with their associated recommendations—including joint training, militaristic tendencies, integrated communications networks, and structural systems for collaboration.

1. Joint Training

Dr. Chris Seiple advised in his 1996 book that the collaboration between the military and the other players involved should take place prior to the actual humanitarian event. He suggested that NGOs and other response organizations would benefit if they could develop a way to get more involved in the interagency planning process prior to an

event.¹⁵⁵ Nick Spence suggests that humanitarian response organizations, both military and non-military, need to come together for training with the intent to identify their respective capabilities and develop an agreed upon end state. With their capabilities identified and end state defined, the organizations can then work together to design a plan accounting for the strengths and weaknesses of the players involved.¹⁵⁶

The case studies examined in this thesis indicate that although Seiple's recommendation has been followed in some instances, humanitarian response organizations still do not routinely train together as much as they should. During the early stages of Operation Unified Assistance in Indonesia, some military participants struggled to grasp the intent and locations of numerous NGOs spread throughout the area.¹⁵⁷ The lack of understanding and initial coordination between the military's CCC and the UN's IASC slowed early coordination and processing of the many individual assessments and collaboration meetings conducted during the first few days of the mission.¹⁵⁸ The delays created by early misunderstandings and duplications of effort could have been avoided had the various organizations and associated leaders conducted scenario-based training or at least familiarization seminars prior to the event.

The situation regarding joint interaction in 2010 following the earthquake in Haiti showed much improvement compared to the 2004 Indonesian disaster because many of the players in Haiti already had established working relationships prior to the crisis.¹⁵⁹ The UN, NGOs, and various militaries had already been coordinating various activities through MINUSTAH for a few years prior to 2010, which demonstrates how prior joint experience can drastically improve initial coordination efforts during a time-sensitive event.

¹⁵⁵ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 193.

¹⁵⁶ Spence, "EYEWITNESS—Civil-Military Cooperation in Complex Emergencies," 167.

¹⁵⁷ Daly, *Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Communications for the 21st Century*, 7.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, *U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake*, 61.

One effort to bring organizations together outside of an actual event exists in the Joint Humanitarian Operations Course (JHOC) provided by USAID.¹⁶⁰ At this course, members of the military and other leading humanitarian organizations meet for a two day course that covers the spectrum of responsibilities, capabilities, and expectations USAID brings to the field. The JHOC is an effective course in providing information to military and civilian leaders, but it is completely voluntary and does not include hands-on training exercises and significant relationship building opportunities.

The DOD has updated and published its Foreign Humanitarian Assistance manual to include instructions and procedures for working with U.S. government agencies and non-government agencies.¹⁶¹ The manual, however, does not include any extensive procedures for conducting joint exercises to prepare commands and units to interact with other entities.

The UN has made significant strides to develop training and partnership programs to educate and integrate humanitarian leaders from all aspects of the humanitarian response. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) states, “The UN Training and Partnership Unit (TPU) establishes partnerships with various organizations around the world, which allows OCHA to deliver and sustain its UN-CMCoord Training Programme catering to the training needs of its beneficiaries within the humanitarian and military communities.”¹⁶² The TPU currently maintains a training schedule that includes four core training products designed to familiarize attendees with OCHA’s practical application of civil-military coordination principles. The efforts of OCHA and the effectiveness of its training products are significant contributors to the mutual understanding and effective interaction of all the entities involved in a humanitarian effort, but, like USAID’s training programs, they are voluntary and require significant time, travel, and funding for participants.

¹⁶⁰ “U.S. Government Agencies and Military,” USAID, accessed November 15, 2015, <https://www.usaid.gov/partnership-opportunities/us-government-and-military>.

¹⁶¹ Joint Publication 3–29.

¹⁶² “Training and Partnerships,” United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination-tools/UN-CMCoord/training-partnerships%20>.

The U.S. military, USG agencies, and prominent U.S. based NGOs should make attendance to USAID's JHOC, or an enhanced version of JHOC, mandatory for all entities that might be involved in a humanitarian response. Military units alongside USAID should also develop and conduct regular interaction exercises that incorporate various USG agencies and NGO leadership in a field and state-side coordination cell environment. Familiarization courses, such as JHOC, and regularly scheduled joint exercise will streamline interaction during an actual event, as well as reduce friction between military and civilian personalities forced to come together for the first time in the heart of a crisis.

2. Militaristic Tendencies

Thomas R. Mockaitis suggested that the military's inherent focus on military tasks and procedures makes it an objectionable candidate to work in a humanitarian environment.¹⁶³ His coverage of Kosovo detailed many of the issues relief organizations had when working with military personnel. In summary, soldiers acting like soldiers became an issue in the humanitarian environment. From the tactical level with soldiers carrying their rifles at-the-ready to the operational level with operations centers closed off and restricted to civilian personnel, humanitarian organizations found it difficult to work with the military.¹⁶⁴

Understanding the associated difficulties of civil-military relations, Mockaitis stressed a common principle that civil-military relationship building is essential for progress in humanitarian operations.¹⁶⁵ To be effective, military personnel must build relationships with both civilian organizations participating in the response and local civilians affected by the humanitarian crisis. Protection measures that include intimidation, abuse, and excessive force limit the relationship building capabilities of both the military and the civilian relief personnel perceived to be associated with the military. Force protection is an important aspect of any operation, but in a humanitarian

¹⁶³ Mockaitis, "CIMIC in Peace Operations: Kosovo," 33-34.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

situation, Mockaitis and others argue that positive relations with the surrounding populations and civilians familiar with the area will do more for security than excessive force protection measures.¹⁶⁶

The cases examined here suggest there has been progress toward achieving the more positive relationship that Mockaitis called for. For example, many civilian relief personnel during Operation Unified Response commented on the military's preparedness to interact with their agencies at the tactical level.¹⁶⁷ The frequent contact military personnel have had with civilian organizations and contractors in Afghanistan and Iraq over the past decade has increased the familiarity between soldiers and civilians during civil-military coordination. With the Iraq mission completed, and Afghanistan winding down, however, the familiar civil-military relations in the field will diminish unless the military and NGOs continue to find ways to frequently interact. The joint training exercises and courses discussed in the previous subsection will help maintain the familiarity and relative ease of tactical interactions in future joint operations.

Seiple suggested in 1996 that military commanders should remove themselves from their military centric and isolated control centers and take advantage of civilian insight by emphasizing greater importance and military participation at the CMOC or its equivalent.¹⁶⁸ As military commanders act less like commanders of operations surrounded by military defenses and more like willing participants in a collective effort to save lives and do no harm, civilian entities will be more willing to serve actively alongside military leaders rather than as reluctant dependents of the military's logistic capabilities. The CMOC or its equivalent should be established early as a neutral center on neutral ground with decision-makers from all parties present to facilitate rapid information flow and collaboration.¹⁶⁹ During the assessment stage of the Indonesian response, both NGOs and the military possessed valuable assessment information that

¹⁶⁶ Mockaitis, "CIMIC in Peace Operations: Kosovo," 33-34.

¹⁶⁷ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, 62.

¹⁶⁸ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 202.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

would have been useful to each other if shared. Many NGOs did not relay their assessments with the military because neutral coordination systems were non-existent, and NGOs did not want to risk losing impartiality by communicating on military grounds.¹⁷⁰ The lack of vital information flow delayed and duplicated many initial essential deliveries and support to critical areas.¹⁷¹

3. Integrated Communication Networks

Communication during a humanitarian response has always been an essential component of effective and efficient operations. The essential nature of communication increases exponentially as the scope and scale of humanitarian responses continue to expand. In each case study presented, the number of relief organizations and participants exceeded 100, not including the local population at the heart of the destruction. In most humanitarian circumstances, time is critical. Military and civilian humanitarian organizations must communicate and cooperate to avoid conducting parallel operations and duplicating efforts in order to reach and help as many people as possible. At the earliest stages of a response, the assessment conducted by military units and NGOs must be communicated to ensure the right equipment, supplies, and people will be delivered. Progress reports and developing situations must be reported throughout the response to operations centers to ensure the appropriate level of support to the appropriate areas continues. It is easy to see how communication plays an essential role at every stage of a humanitarian response.

Multiple challenges exist when faced with fixing the communications issues relief personnel have experienced in past humanitarian responses. An obvious communication challenge includes the use of foreign languages, but the operational language used by the military also differs from the language used by civilian organizations and can cause difficulties and delays in communication efforts.¹⁷² Another challenge existed in Haiti

¹⁷⁰ Telford, Cosgrave, Houghton, Joint Evaluation of the International Response to the Indian Ocean Tsunami, 100.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Andrea Van Dijk, "Tough Talk: Clear and Cluttered Communication During Peace Operations," in *Military Cooperation in Multinational Peace Operations: Managing Cultural Diversity and Crisis Response*, ed. Joseph Soeters and Philippe Manigart, (New York: Routledge, 2008), 70-71.

where the local communications structure was destroyed and inoperable. Many organizations relied on the military for communication needs, but they experienced difficulties when their communications systems were not compatible with military systems.¹⁷³

The operational language challenge that civilian organizations face when dealing with military units can be overcome by a combination of two solutions. First, civilian organizations should familiarize themselves with military lingo and acronyms. The second is for military units, especially units preparing for and engaging in humanitarian operations, to speak plain English without the use of common military operational language. Those two solutions seem almost obvious enough that they do not warrant space in this thesis, but the confusion and delays created from the use of military jargon continues to be an issue in humanitarian operations.¹⁷⁴

The challenge presented by incompatible communications networks has also been an ongoing issue experienced in most large-scale humanitarian operations to date. In Indonesia during Operation Unified Assistance, the military's use of the SIPR net and other unique communication systems prevented other organizations from participating in meetings and receiving valuable information. As a result, the flawed and unreliable Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN) managed by PACOM became the best option for unclassified communication.¹⁷⁵

In more recent operations such as Haiti and West Africa, the need to transmit information at the unclassified level was more widely understood and communication efforts have been more effective. The next step is the creation and implementation of a dedicated network compatible with and shared by all organizations involved in a humanitarian response. Humanitarian response planners cannot predict whether or not local communication systems will remain operational following a disaster, therefore, a

¹⁷³ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, 61.

¹⁷⁴ Van Dijk, "Tough Talk," 78.

¹⁷⁵ Daly, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Communications for the 21st Century, 8.

portable communication system shared by response personnel is essential to ensure constant communication capabilities from the beginning.

4. Structural Systems for Collaboration

Coordination and Collaboration seem to be the buzzwords throughout humanitarian response planning and review. In each case study examined in this thesis, as well as the case studies presented by Seiple in 1996, the issue of whether or not proper coordination and collaboration centers existed and operated effectively found its way into the literature. Seiple concluded that an improved CMOC should be the coordination center of choice, however, in the cases examined here, each humanitarian response commander chose a different type of civil-military interaction.¹⁷⁶ In Indonesia, MEF Commander Lt Gen Robert Blackman set up the Combined Coordination Center (CCC) at his JTF HQ, while in Haiti the military utilized a Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center (HACC) with operations split between the OFDA team at the U.S. embassy and the OCHA team at the UN Logistics Base.¹⁷⁷

In each circumstance, the established center helped achieve the commander's end state, but valuable time was used to determine what center to use and then familiarize the various organizations with its operations. If the major players coming together in a humanitarian operation already had an established plan for a coordination center, they could immediately begin operations rather than reinventing the wheel.

The U.S. government agencies participating in humanitarian responses often have their own coordination centers that operate parallel to the military's coordination center. Normally, USAID will send a disaster assistance response team (DART) to supplement UN, NGO, and military coordination efforts to facilitate a smooth flow of support from U.S. resources into the effort. In Haiti, however, in addition to the standard response management team in Washington and a DART on site, USAID set up additional coordination offices including a state-side interagency task force, and the Office of the Response Coordinator (ORC) in Haiti. The coordination efforts continued to grow in

¹⁷⁶ Seiple, *The U.S. Military/NGO Relationship in Humanitarian Interventions*, 203.

¹⁷⁷ Loughran, *Who's in Charge Here*, 5.

quantity when FEMA also participated by activating a National Response Coordination Center (NRCC).¹⁷⁸

The coordination centers listed in the previous two paragraphs are only a few of the many coordination systems that operate parallel to many others in disaster situations, including host nation coordination cells, inter-NGO coordinating offices, and additional international coordination designs of all shapes and sizes. The amount of delay and confusion created during the numerous coordination meetings at the numerous coordination centers are incalculable, but have proven to be a continuing hindrance to fast and efficient humanitarian action.

Over the past decade, permanent coordinating structures have been designed and operated in an attempt to maximize coordination while minimizing delay. The UN cluster system is a good example of the continuing efforts in the humanitarian community to streamline response coordination. The UN cluster system, consisting of 11 separate clusters or functional areas of coordination, helps speed communication and decision-making by filtering the massive amounts of information into specific areas of focus, but faces challenges as needs and responsibilities overlap when coordination does not.¹⁷⁹

It is not clear how a smooth and efficient coordination system should be designed, but it is clear that there should not be so many coordination centers, offices, and cells operating parallel to one another in a crisis situation. The design of the ultimate coordination center may not be as important as an agreement between all the entities involved in a humanitarian response to limit the number of coordination centers in operation by combining forces.

¹⁷⁸ Cecchine, Morgan, Wermuth, Jackson, Schaefer, Stafford, U.S. Military Response to the 2010 Haiti Earthquake, 203; Kirsch, Sauer, and Sapir, "Analysis of the International and US Response to the Haiti Earthquake," 204.

¹⁷⁹ Vanessa Humphries, "Improving Humanitarian Coordination: Common Challenges and Lessons Learned from the Cluster Approach," *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, (April 2013), <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/1976>.

B. THE WAY FORWARD

The four overarching issues presented in this conclusion span the realm of components that require military/USG/NGO interaction in a humanitarian operation. The issues exist during planning and preparation as well as during execution and coordination. Researchers and planners have dedicated considerable effort dissecting each issue, and even components within each issue, to develop logical and sound recommendations to improve interaction. On occasions, new methods and innovations have worked with a degree of success in some areas, such as the UN cluster system in Haiti and the APAN in Indonesia, but have failed to make reliable progress in the overall effort to improve humanitarian interaction. Perhaps the reason for the slow progress is the isolation of each issue from the others when developing recommendations on how to improve that individual area of concern. A grander solution that considers each phase of the humanitarian operation and includes all the entities that might be involved may be needed to improve humanitarian interaction.

The way forward is to remind ourselves of a similar vision that led to the Goldwater-Nichols Act¹⁸⁰ and implement a big picture solution.¹⁸¹ When a humanitarian crisis arises, the U.S. Government cannot send USAID, the U.S. military, the Department of State, and various other organizations to respond and expect them to automatically work harmoniously together. The organizations expected to travel across the world within a small window of time to an area recently devastated by a natural disaster must be completely familiar and integrated with each other if they are to be expected to offer immediate, effective, and efficient humanitarian assistance. Even experienced quarterbacks, receivers, and linemen in American football would not fare well without extensive prior coordination against a team of mediocre players organized and ready to play as a team. The USG humanitarian response team must plan, prepare, and practice together before showing up in the field if they are going to be successful.

¹⁸⁰ In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Act restructured the United States Military Command to emphasize more planning and operations in a joint setting rather than service-specific activities.

¹⁸¹ Dr. Charles M. Perry, and Marina Travayiakis, "Reforming Military Support for Foreign Disaster Relief and Humanitarian Assistance," *Liaison* Vol. 4, 1, (2008): 40, <http://www.ifpa.org/pdf/LiaisonPerry.pdf>.

A dedicated unit designed to immediately respond and lead the USG's humanitarian response should be created. Similar to the U.S. Army's Global Response Force (GRF), a special humanitarian response force should stand ready to deploy anywhere in the world, with an intimate humanitarian focus, within 18 hours. The humanitarian response unit will deploy ahead of other military and USG entities with the capabilities and expertise to conduct extensive assessments, set up the response coordination center, perform life-saving activities, and receive incoming military and civilian response commodities and personnel. This unit should be comprised of leaders and representatives from all pertinent agencies and organizations along with the resources and funding necessary to accomplish the missions assigned to it.

An interagency humanitarian response unit comprised of DOD, USAID, DOS, and even NGO personnel can design a system and structure that will take into account the four primary issues previously discussed. The unit will be able to design and conduct joint training activities that integrate additional forces and personnel from each agency depending on the scale of the emergency. A delay resulting from the time spent familiarizing one another with each agency's particular structure and intent at the beginning of a response will be eliminated.

Soldiers and civilians will benefit through the constant interaction with each other within the unit, which will reduce the issues arising from institutional differences discussed in the militaristic tendencies subsection.

The interagency humanitarian unit will be required to develop a portable and integrated communication network that is compatible within its own ranks, as well as each individual agency. The single communications system used by this humanitarian unit may serve as a model for other international humanitarian organizations to emulate, ensuring integrated and reliable communications will exist anywhere around the world among all entities involved.

The DOD, USAID, DOS, and other major players in a humanitarian response all belonging to a single unit will reduce the number and variations of coordination systems and centers. With the majority of USG coordination occurring in one place, the time

spent in meetings and on coordinating activities will be drastically reduced. As the Goldwater-Nichols Act pushed the U.S. military to think, train, and act jointly, we need a similar act of legislation today that would push the U.S. interagency community to think about its response to humanitarian crises in the same way.

Francis Kofi Abiew admonished that the “effectiveness of contemporary peace operations will depend on the collaboration of military and civilian actors.”¹⁸² Civilian and military organizations entering a humanitarian crisis, even with the best intentions, will continue to experience unnecessary challenges and delays unless they can join forces to plan, prepare for, and execute the humanitarian response together as one.

¹⁸² Abiew, *From Civil Strife to Civic Society*, 7.

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